



Billing Code: 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XP18

Marine Mammals; File No. 14334

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that that the Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC), 301 Railway Avenue, Seward, AK 99664 (Dr. Tara Riemer Jones, Responsible Party), has been issued a major amendment to Permit No. 14334-01.

ADDRESSES: The permit amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)427-8401; fax (301)713-0376; and

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907)586-7221; fax (907)586-7249.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Sloan or Tammy Adams, (301)427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 22, 2011, notice was published in the Federal Register (76 FR 72178) that a request to amend Permit No. 14334-01 to conduct research on Steller sea lions (Eumetopias jubatus) had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The

requested permit amendment has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Permit No. 14334-02 authorizes (1) the addition of a respiratory stimulant drug prior to anesthesia to mitigate breath holding and decreased heart rate; (2) the use of additional dietary markers to individually identify feces for hormone analysis; (3) administration of deuterium oxide via a gastric tube and serial blood sampling to assess energy transfer from mother to pup during lactation; (4) reduced research sampling of aging sea lions; and (5) mortality or euthanasia of sea lions for health reasons not directly related to research. These changes are effective for the duration of the permit, which expires August 31, 2014.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), NMFS has determined that the activities proposed are consistent with the Preferred Alternative in the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Steller Sea Lion and Northern Fur Seal Research (NMFS 2007), and that issuance of the permit would not have a significant adverse impact on the human environment.

As required by the ESA, issuance of this permit was based on a finding that such permit:
(1) was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: May 24, 2012.

Tammy C. Adams, Acting Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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